



Immunisation and Infectious Disease Policy

Issue Date:
October 2022

Review Date:
October 2024

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
77	Health, hygiene and safe food practices
88	Infectious diseases
90	Medical conditions policy
162	Health information to be kept in enrolment record
168	Education and care service must have policies and procedures
172(2)(g)	a notice stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the premises
EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL LAW	
174(2)(a)	Notification to the Regulatory Authority- (a) any serious incident at the approved education and care service

QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY		
2.1	Health	Each child's health and physical activity is supported and promoted.
2.1.2	Health practices and procedures	Effective illness and injury management and hygiene practices are promoted and implemented.
2.2	Safety	Each child is protected
2.2.2	Incident and emergency management	Plans to effectively manage incidents and emergencies are developed in consultation with relevant authorities, practiced and implemented.

Policy Statement

Lipscombe Early Years Education and Care has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with an environment where the risk of exposure to communicable diseases is minimised. Immunisation is nationally recognised as one of the most effective ways of reducing spread of disease. Not only can it protect the person who is immunized, but also those who are too young to be immunized or whose systems did not respond to a vaccine. The more people who are immunized against a disease, the lower the chances for everyone of coming into contact with someone who has the disease. This is known as herd immunity.

There is recognition that when groups of people share and engage together in a close environment, illness and disease may spread from one person to another, even when recommended hygiene and infection control practices are effectively implemented. If a person contracts a disease, immunisation may help the person more rapidly respond and prevent them becoming as ill.

Target Audience

Management, Educator, Families, Children, Volunteers, Students on practicum placement

Definitions

- Medically immunised (Immunisation) means both receiving a medical vaccine; and becoming immune to a disease, as a result of being vaccinated. Medical immunisation does not include a person who may have been naturopathically or homeopathically vaccinated.
- Infectious Disease means a disease that can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another.
- An emergency contact includes the child's parent (unless excluded by a Court Order) or an authorised emergency contact listed in the child's enrolment record.
In the case of a staff member, volunteer or student on practicum placement, an emergency contact refers to the details listed as the person to be contacted in case of emergency.
- Emergency is defined as when symptoms of an illness are life threatening and may require first aid, medical treatment and/or an ambulance.
- Medical advice is defined as advice from a registered medical practitioner.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to provide information to minimise and manage the spread of infectious diseases through the systematic implementation of set procedures and practices.

This policy also aims to acknowledge and respect the right of individuals to enrol children at the Service who are unimmunized, outlining the connection to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and the required exclusion periods in the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease.

Guidelines / Procedures

The Service will:

- Through an effective enrolment and orientation process, provide families and staff with information relating to the national immunisation schedule, infectious diseases, and exclusion periods;
- Promote awareness and implementation of immunisation recommendations;
- Ensure evidence of each child's immunisation is collected prior to their attendance, or ensure an Immunisation Medical Exemption form, certified by a GP, is on file.
- Ensure a system is in place to ensure children's immunisation records are updated regularly
- Encourage educators and staff to be immunized including annual flu or other vaccinations recommended by Department of Health.
- Identify and exclude all children and staff with symptoms of an excludable and infectious disease;
- Notify families when an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs through various channels of communication:
 - verbally
 - posting a note or sign at the entry of the Service
 - via electronic message- text message, email, app message
- Notify the Regulatory Authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious illness
- Notify the Public Health Unit (PHU) of any outbreak of vaccine preventable diseases (1300 066 055)
- Promote hand washing and other hygienic practices (please refer to Hygiene and Infection Control Policy);
- Maintain a clean and hygienic environment;

Families will:

- Provide evidence of their child's immunization as part of the enrolment procedure, by providing an Australian Immunisation History Statement showing the child is 'up to date' with scheduled vaccinations, or, on a recognized catch up schedule.
- Provide the Service with an updated immunization record each time the next scheduled immunization has been completed.

Exclusions

Exclusion minimises the potential transmission of a disease from one person to another and assists in the recovery of the sick child / staff.

Exclusion is required when:

- A child or educator is unimmunized and there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease. This includes any child who may be immunized, but for whom evidence of immunization has not been provided.
- An exclusion period is outlined in *Staying Healthy 5th Edition (2021)* or required by the Department of Health;
- The child who is ill requires a higher level of care than the staff are able to provide, which may result in compromising duty of care to that child or other children;
- The child is unwell or presents with symptoms of a disease, and a specific diagnosis for the child's illness has not been provided;
- A child or staff member has an illness that may affect the health of others;
- An illness results in the child not being able to cope adequately with the normal routines, experiences and activities of the day at the Service.

If a child or educator is confirmed to have a communicable disease, completes the exclusion period but symptoms still present, a clearance from a medical practitioner may be required before the child/educator returns to the Service.

COVID - 19

Refer to the Service COVID Safety Plan

The Service strongly encourages everyone eligible for vaccination to be immunised against Covid-19.

Identifying Symptoms of an Excludable Infectious Illness or Disease

Refer to *Staying Healthy 5th Edition (2021)* or the most current information from the Department of Health.

Current and up to date information about illness and disease will be made available to staff, families and volunteers through a range of different means such as Service Newsletters, emails, SchoolZine App, notices on within programs, policies and procedures, staff/coordinator meetings or induction information.

Children Who Are Not Immunised

Children who are not medically immunised may still be enrolled at the Service. The Service must be provided with a copy of a medical exemption to enable enrolment for Child Care Subsidy. A record will be maintained with the child's enrolment record.

Where a child has not been medically immunised (as per the National Immunisation Program Schedule) and there is an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, the child will be excluded from the Service in line with the relevant exclusion period. The exclusion period will occur even if the child is well. There will be no variation to the regular fee structure during these times (Note: the immunisation status of a child may impact on eligibility for CCS and other government subsidies).

If families have not provided evidence of immunisation, children will be treated as if they have not been immunized, meaning that they will be excluded from the Service in line with the relevant exclusion period, even if the child is well.

Educators and Staff

In adulthood, diseases included on the National Immunisation Program Schedule may also be prevented by up to date immunisation.

Full vaccination of staff against diseases included on the National Immunisation Program Schedule is encouraged; however, we respect the right of those who have chosen not to be immunised. Staff who are not immunised will be unable to work during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

Staff are encouraged to be immunised with all scheduled vaccinations as well as the annual flu vaccine and Hepatitis A and B vaccine & COVID 19 booster vaccine. The Service may support provision of immunisation of staff.

Immunisation records will be maintained in a confidential manner on individual staff files. Staff are responsible for providing the Service with their current and up to date immunisation records.

Staff Professional Developmental Opportunities

Lipscombe Early Years Education and Care recognises the importance of staff having the opportunity to embed and extend their skills and knowledge of children's health, safety and well-being. To effectively support this, Lipscombe Early Years Education and Care will ensure current, relevant information is shared with staff through avenues such as staff notes, articles, guidelines or procedures. Staff meetings will be used for discussions as well as focused group training sessions.

Sources:

Tasmania (TAS)
Children do not need to be immunised to attend early childhood education and care services. Children who are not immunised must be excluded if there is an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease.
The National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule can be accessed and downloaded from: https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-immunisation-program-schedule-portrait <ul style="list-style-type: none">National Immunisation program – Tasmania http://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/communicable_diseases_prevention_unit/immunisationFunded Immunisation Schedule (July 2020) https://www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/communicable_diseases_prevention_unit/immunisation/publications/adult_and_child_immunisation_scheduleTasmanian Department of Health and Human Services immunisation hotline (1800 671 738)Immunise Australia National Hotline: 1800 671 811Australian Government, Department of Human Services: https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/medicare/getting-your-immunisation-history-statement-using-your-medicare-online-account

Program Variations

Sandy Bay / Waimea Schools

Maintain ongoing communication with the relevant School where there is an outbreak of any infectious disease.

Links to Other Policies

Child Protection Policy

Enrolment Orientation and Access Policy

First Aid Policy

Hygiene and Infection Control
Medication
Workplace Health and Safety
Supporting Individual Needs
Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy
COVID Safety Plan

References

Royal Melbourne Children's Hospital
Staying Healthy 5th Edition
Department of Health www.immunise.health.gov.au
Raising Child Network – www.raisingchildren.net.au
Department of Health
Child Care Desktop – Policy references

Policy Review

The policies and procedures of Lipscombe Early Years Education and Care will be reviewed every two years (This timeframe may be altered and shortened where new information becomes available and/or legislative requirements alter).

Families, volunteers and other relevant stakeholders are encouraged to collaborate with the Service to review and update the Service's policies and procedures.

It is essential for all staff to be involved in the policy review process and to familiarise themselves with the Service's policies and procedures, the requirements and expectations and to acknowledge all updates and changes in writing.

Changes Made at Review

Policy statement, Definitions, more information with regards to management of illness, more information regarding exclusions, assessing illness and infectious disease, Information regarding fevers, documenting symptoms, Notifying families, Protective behaviours, Communication with different stakeholders, Privacy and Confidentiality, Experiences.

Last review June 2007

August 2011 – removed QIAS links and replaced with new quality standards

August 2012 – new Updated from the original immunization policy from 2006, added in health-related exclusion, statement, identifying symptoms, children who are not immunised, staff, exclusion guidelines, signs of illness, notifying families, protective behaviours, staff professional development, communication with different stake holders, privacy and confidentiality, excursions, community links, links to other policies, links to QIAS, references, attachments.

February 2013 – Added reference to Regulations, added immunisation policy.

March 2016 – updated to reflect changes to immunisation requirements for CCB/CCR 2016 and Staying Healthy 5th Edition

May 2018 – Updated National Quality Standards

Reviewed October 2018 - Updated references to the NQS; reviewed formatting, content and spelling; updated to reflect transition to CCS.

April 2021 – Updated table to reflect regulations and references to NQF, removed identifying illness section, added reference to COVID -19 and COVID Safety Plan

October 2022- Update educator Covid- 19 requirements. Added herd immunity reference to policy statement. Checked sources for currency of information. Amended sections 'Service will' and 'Families will'